How exactly does 'identification' occur?

There was a question from one of the visitors one morning. He said, rather hesitantly – not knowing how elementary his question might sound – that he had gathered that the problem about 'bondage' and 'liberation' really rested on the question of identification, but that he was not very clear about how this identification comes about. He also added – perhaps deciding that if he was going to be 'in for a penny' he might as well be 'in for a pound' – that he could not quite understand the need for spiritual knowledge if at the end of one's life the result is the same in the case of both the dnyaani and the ignorant: the body ~~turns back into the five~~ goes back to the five elements and consciousness becomes 'nirguna'.

As the Shri Maharaj usually listens to the speaker with his eyes closed – particularly if he is speaking in Marathi – ~~so that~~ perhaps so that he might hear better, and as he was listening to the speaker asking his question, it seemed from the expression on his face that he would snap back and say: "What kind of a question is this?"; but perhaps spontaneously sensing the sincerity of the visitor's need and the interest of the other visitors also, his expression softened into a smile, and he sat there for a while with his eyes closed, perhaps wondering how it he would frame an answer to what certainly must have seemed an obvious point.

Shri Maharaj kept his eyes closed but started speaking softly: "Let us start with the essential understanding. The entire manifested universe is an appearance in consciousness. If you are not conscious, the world does not exist for you, and nothing in it can have any interest for you. This consciousness – in which each one of us appears to the others, and in which we all

cognise the phenomenal universe – is ALL THAT WE ALL ARE. ~~Nonmenally, of course, there is no question~~ As long as we are in this phenomenal world, we can only perceive THAT; we cannot apperceive THIS-WHICH-WE-ARE until we wake up from this dream, understand the dream as it was, and stop conceptualising, objectivising. This is the basic essential: the nonmenal is the substance, the phenomenal is the shadow – they are not ~~too~~ different.

The next point to understand is this: in the phenomenal world if 'you' see 'him', both are objects seen by each other as appearances in consciousness. But – do understand this – there is no subject that sees the other as an object. There is only SEEING, which is only FUNCTIONING as an aspect of the nonmenal potential. This applies to everything else: hearing, touching, tasting etc. – all is essentially "functioning".

Now, proceed further: this 'functioning' takes place through the medium of the physical form, the psycho-somatic apparatus, which, as a phenomenon, is only a manifestation and, therefore, an aspect of nonmenon, the shadow of the substance. So long as there is no question of an individual entity assuming choice of action, phenomenal functioning is all that takes place, and the question of bondage and liberation does not arise.

BUT, what happens is that the functional core of a psycho-somatic form – we might call it the "personal" consciousness for our purpose, although consciousness cannot be divided as such – gets bestowed with a spurious subjectivity as a separate entity although it is ~~in~~ fact only an object with the nonmenon as the only SUBJECT. Thus is created the pseudo-entity that is supposed to be born, to live and to die, and this pseudo-entity is also supposed to have independent authority to choose and decide! And with this assumed independent and

authority is also assumed the responsibility for all that would happen in the functioning of the manifested world - the suffering in this world and the anticipated sins and merits, and the consequential 'bondage' and the need for 'liberation'.

Is the position now clear? What-we-ARE identifies itself with what-we-ARE-NOT, the latter being the pseudo-entity. 'Bondage' arises with this identification. It is this pseudo-entity that suffers guilt and bondage and seeks liberation. 'I' cannot possibly suffer because 'I' have no instrument with which any sensation could be experienced. ~~The only object that~~ Any experience of either kind - pleasant or unpleasant - could only be experienced by an identified object called 'Me'.

Now, finally, understand what happens in the case of the dnyaani. The dnyaani has apperceived the basic illusion of the manifested universe and his role as a phenomenon in the spontaneous functioning of the manifestation. He has adapted himself smoothly to whatever may happen to the phenomenon as it completes its allotted span of life, and thereafter 'returns home'. He seems to others to be living as any other man lives, but the significant difference is that he has disidentified himself from the pseudo-entity.

~~The~~ In the case of the ignorant person, on the other hand, the pseudo-entity, itself an illusion, continues to go through the dream-world, that the manifestation is, as an independent entity with that ~~is responsible for the conception of the karmic effects~~, with apparent volition, involves itself in the sequence of the notion of causality known as Karma, including the concept of re-birth.

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through millions of forms which are created and destroyed every moment, and in this spontaneous functioning of Prakrtyaa, there is no place at all for the notion of any entity. Therefore, any action – positive or negative – based on the notion of an autonomous, independent entity, implies a fundamental failure to grasp the essentials of Vedanta. So long as there is a pseudo-entity considering itself a seeker and working towards 'liberation' it will continue to remain in bondage. It must be deeply, intuitively appreciated that the sought is the seeker and when this happens, the seeker disappears!